

A THEORETICAL INTERLUDE

Communists were not loath to write openly about their aims and tactics. In 1932, on the occasion of the Iranian-British conflict about oil, a revealing article was published in the Comintern's organ, *International Press Correspondence*, under the title "The Fight for Persian Oil and the Tasks of the C.P. of Iran." It was signed by L. Magyar and is worth reproducing in its major parts:

The conflict which has arisen between British imperialism and the Reza Khan government, confronts the Communist Party of Iran, all revolutionary elements and all anti-imperialist fighters in the country with responsible tasks.

The C.P. of Iran regards as its chief task to mobilize the working masses for the fight against British imperialism and to *organize* them in the course of this fight, to set up a proletarian cadre in the anti-imperialist movement, and thereby win the hegemony of the proletariat in this fight.

In order to be able to solve this strategic task the Communist Party of Iran clearly takes into account the meaning, content and character of the conflict which has arisen and is still going on, between British imperialism and the Reza Khan government and also the perspectives of the struggle. . . .

Persia achieved its national independence as a result of the October revolution. . . . At the same time, however, the ruling classes of Persia succeeded in throttling the national revolutionary movement in its beginnings. The Ghilan revolution was crushed. . . . The anti-imperialist movement was not carried out to an end. The country became independent *politically*; *economically*, however, all the important key positions remained in the hands of the . . . British imperialists. . . .

Economically Persia remained a *semi-colony* of imperialism. . . . The most important key positions of the country—foreign trade, oil, banking, motor transport—remained under the control of British finance capital.

This circumstance and the class character of the government of Reza Khan caused the latter to pursue the path of capitulation to imperialism. Many Persian comrades have put forward the view that Reza Khan is only an agent of British imperialism. Other comrades, on the other hand, maintained that Reza Khan is the bearer of national progress and is successfully solving the task of the national emancipation and centralization of the country. It is scarcely necessary to emphasize that both these points of view are incorrect. . . .

The fight which Reza Khan is conducting over Persian oil is nothing else but *a national-reformist fight*, and there is every prospect of his capitulating